

Sports

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JOURNALSTAR.COM/SPORTS

SECTION B

Finally, home is where the (start) is



KENNETH FERRIERA, JOURNAL STAR FILE PHOTO

No one on Nebraska's current roster has played a season opener at Memorial Stadium. That changes Saturday vs. UTEP.

Nebraska to open season at home for first time since '19

EVAN BLAND
Omaha World-Herald

The Nebraska buses will roll to a stop at the intersection of 14th and Vine at about 12:15 p.m. Saturday. Awaiting players and coaches from there is a four-minute walk to the team facility as throngs of fans cheer them on.

"Does it take four minutes for us?" coach Matt Rhule asked his chief of staff, Susan Elza, this



FOOTBALL SATURDAY
UTEP at Nebraska, 2:30 p.m.

TV: Fox. **Radio:** 1400, 98.1.

week. Four minutes and seven seconds, she replied.

The second-year head man gave a nod and a small smile. Home is where the start is — of a season where the Huskers will take every edge they can find.

A 2:30 kickoff against UTEP at Memorial Stadium won't much move the national needle. That's just fine for Nebraska after four

straight high-exposure road trips against Big Ten opponents all began seasons with Big Red gut punches. NU has spent the last three Labor Day weekends at 0-1.

What's the value of a Husker opener at home? No one on the current roster has played in one, not even offensive tackle Bryce Benhart whose 42nd career start Saturday will be the most ever by a Nebraska O-lineman. Only

Please see FOOTBALL, Page B2

■ **INSIDE:** Storylines, matchups and numbers to know for Huskers-Miners. **Page B6**

HUSKER VOLLEYBALL

Reilly's serves give NU big lift

Goosebumps.

Starting lineup announcements at the Devaney Sports Center are always a must-watch. The electric hype video. The superstar-like treatment of Nebraska's starters with most of the lights off, save for a couple of spotlights and the large video boards.

The loud cheers for each and every member of the team? It's cool. It's always cool.

But the roar that came for sophomore outside hitter Harper Murray when she was announced?

Pew. Goosebumps.

The applause for her, and Nebraska's All-American libero Lexi Rodriguez, were the loudest two on Friday.

If Murray didn't feel the support of Nebraska volleyball fans before, I hope she felt it then.

Moments after that, though, all business.

No. 2 Nebraska (2-0) made quick work of Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, sweeping the Islanders, 25-9, 25-20, 25-15, in the Huskers' home opener.

WHAT I LOVED

Bergen Reilly's serving

Bergen Reilly, my goodness. The sophomore setter usually gets it started at the service line for Nebraska, and she took residence there on Friday night to start Nebraska's match.

Reilly served 11 times in a row. Eleven. After the match, Reilly said she thinks that's her longest serving run ever.

In that run, she had three ace serves — including back-to-back aces to give Nebraska leads of 7-0 and 8-0.

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KENNETH FERRIERA, JOURNAL STAR

Nebraska's Bergen Reilly (center) celebrates with her teammates against Texas A&M-Corpus Christi on Friday at the Devaney Sports Center.

GOOD TO BE HOME

'Fired up' Nebraska puts on show in '24 Devaney debut

BRENT C. WAGNER
Lincoln Journal Star

Nebraska won the first 10 points of the match as it swept Texas A&M-Corpus Christi 25-9, 25-20, 25-15 in its home opener Friday at the Devaney Sports Center.

Setter Bergen Reilly served the unreal start, including three ace serves.

In that rotation, the Huskers have Lindsay Krause, Rebekah Allick and Merritt Beason at the net — a group that can quickly overmatch many teams.

The opening run of points didn't end until Nebraska had a net violation on the 11th rally.

What a start to the first of 18 regular season home matches.

"It kind of just shows how fired up we all are for the season,"

LOOK: To see more photos from Friday's Nebraska volleyball match, point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap the link. [NEWSVU](#)

Krause said. "We weren't going to let anything drop."

Late in the set, Reilly was back at the serving line and served back-to-back aces. She had five aces in the first set, already topping her previous career high of four.

Nebraska topped the Islanders in kills (48-30), blocks (7-2) and ace serves (7-2).

Nebraska coach John Cook said it was a good first home match.

"You could feel the buzz in the arena," Cook said. "I thought Corpus Christi after the first 15 points

played some really good volleyball. For their size, and what they do, they're very well coached. They cover (hitters) amazing, and they don't make errors."

Krause led the Huskers with 13 kills on .478 hitting.

Allick had kills on each of her first five attempts and finished with six kills on .600 hitting. Andi Jackson had seven kills and also hit .600.

Please see VOLLEYBALL, Page B5

PREP FOOTBALL

Christian captures emotional win

Crusaders honor coach's wife, win Spirit Sword

CHRIS BASNETT
Lincoln Journal Star

They're all special when Lincoln Christian and Lincoln Lutheran meet on the football field.

Friday night was even more so.

On a night when both teams played for Da'Nelle Earl, the wife of Lincoln Christian coach Kurt Earl, the Crusaders pulled away from a halftime tie for a 28-14 win in the Battle for the Spirit

LOOK: To see more photos from Friday's Spirit Sword game, point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap the link. [NEWSVU](#)

Sword.

Here are Chris Basnett's takes from the game.

An emotional night

Even 45 minutes before kickoff, this one felt different. Hundreds of people from both schools wore olive green shirts that read "No one fights alone"

to honor Da'Nelle Earl, who earlier this year was diagnosed with glioblastoma, an aggressive, terminal form of brain cancer.

Da'Nelle arrived at the game about 20 minutes before kickoff, and after getting a ride to the Christian side of the field on an ATV, met Kurt for a long embrace as warmups ended.

"I'll probably cry a lot tonight," she said from her seat in the bleachers.

She did, but there were so many good tears.

Please see CHRISTIAN, Page B4



JUSTIN WAN, JOURNAL STAR

Lincoln Christian's Truman Paulsen holds the Spirit Sword after defeating Lincoln Lutheran on Friday at Aldrich Field.

Football
 (CITY SCHOOLS' GAMES IN BOLD)
FRIDAY'S GAMES**Class A**

Belleview West 28, Omaha Central 27
 Norfolk 35, Columbus 28, OT
Elkhorn South 38, Lincoln East 5
 Fremont 49, Bellevue East 0
 Kearney 20, North Platte 0
Lincoln Northeast 48, Omaha Northwest 0
Lincoln North Star at Lincoln Southwest
Lincoln Southeast 35, Grand Island 20
 Millard North 29, Millard West 21
 Millard South at Basha, Ariz.
Omaha Bryan 26, Lincoln High 7

Omaha Burke 62, Omaha Benson 0
 Omaha Westview 52, Omaha South 16
 Papillion-La Vista 29, Papillion-La Vista South 24
 Plattsmouth 57, Omaha Buena Vista 0
 South Sioux City at Sioux City North, IA

Class B

Bennington 23, Waverly 0

Blair 56, Lincoln Standing Bear 12

Elkhorn North 24, Lincoln Plus X 21

Holdrege 35, Lexington 27

McCook 56, Beatrice 6

Omaha Skutt 29, Norris 13

Ralston 44, Lincoln Northwest 0

Scottsbluff 31, Gl Northwest 6

Seward 41, Gretna East 24

Torrington, Wyo., at Gering

York 17, Hastings 14

Class C-1

Ashland-Greenwood 7, DC West 3

Auburn 32, Mount Michael 7

Boys Town 50, Wilber-Clatonia 0

Central City at Ord

Chadron 28, Broken Bow 8

Columbus Lakeview 41, Omaha Gross 21

Fairbury 14, Superior 14

Falls City 42, Palmyra 14

Fort Calhoun 13, Arlington 0

Gordon-Rushville at Alliance

Gothenburg 35, Ogallala 22

Lincoln Christian 28, Lincoln Lutheran 14

Louisville 33, Schuyler 7

Midford 36, Syracuse 32

Omaha Concordia 26, Brownell Talbot 6

Omaha Roncalli 31, Wayne 12

O'Neill 28, Valentine 20

Pierce 41, Aurora 28

Scouts CC 14, Aquinas 7

Sidney 22, Cozad 13

Wahoo 62, Nebraska City 0

West Point-Beemer 26, Logan View 5-5 20

Yuma, Colo., at Chase County

Class C-2

Archbishop Bergan at Conestoga

Battle Creek 21, Cross County 0

Boone Central 14, Cedar Catholic 0

Douglas-Trumbull 20, Amherst 17

Gibson 17, Hershey 14

Grand Island CC 41, Hastings 33

Kearney Catholic 19, St. Paul 7

Malcolm 34, North Bend Central 13

Norfolk Catholic 28, Bishop Neumann 21

Oakland-Craig 14, Yutan 14

Raymond Central 28, Fillmore Central 8

Tekamah-Herman at Ponca

Wheatland, Wyo., at Mitchell

Wood River 33, Centura 20

Class D-1

Arapahoe 44, Cambridge 14

Arcaida-LC 26, Hi-Line 15

Bancroft-Rosalie 34, Tri County NE 20

Boyd County at North Central

David City 64, Centennial 22

Creighton 36, Niobrara/Verdigre 16

Crofton 36, Wynd 12

EMF 50, Clarkson/Leigh 20

East Butler 84, Nebraska Lutheran 6

Guardian Angels CC 39, Laurel-C-C 18

Hartington-Newcastle 54, Ainsworth 34

Homer at Lyons-Decatur NE

Class D-2

JUSTIN WAN/JOURNAL STAR

Lincoln Christian's Dawson Thies (left) is tackled by Lincoln Lutheran's Trenton Kumm in the second half Friday at Aldrich Field.

Saturday's Game**Class A**

Creighton Prep at DeSmet Jesuit, Mo.

Thursday's Results**Class A**

Omaha Westside 22, Omaha North 7

Class B

Gretna 38, Elkhorn 28

Platteview 14, Crete 0

Class C-1

Minden 18, Adams Central 15

Class D-1

Franklin 56, Southern 8

South Loop 54, Hemingford 36

Hyanis 30, Kimball 12

West Holt 36, Elkhorn Valley 14

Class D-2

Hitchcock County 68, Brady 0

Maywood-Hayes Center 19, Wilcox-Hildreth 18

Sandhills/Theordford 58, Anselmo-Merna 16

Class D-6

Creek Valley 48, Minatare 6

Garden County 59, Crawford 13

Saturday's Game**Class A**

ELKHORN SOUTH 38, LINCOLN EAST 5

Elkhorn South 3 21 7 7 - 38

Lincoln East 0 3 2 0 - 5

ES-Parks 28 FG

ES-Shanahan 24 run (Parks kick)

ES-Shanahan 6 run (Parks kick)

ES-Sutko 3 run (Parks kick)

LE-26 FG

LE-Team safety

ES-Tate 95 interception return (Parks kick)

ES-Shanahan 1 run (Parks kick)

OMAHA BRYAN 26, LINCOLN HIGH 7

Lincoln High 0 7 0 0 - 7

Omaha Bryan 0 7 13 6 - 26

OB-Russell 34 pass from Summerfield (Bustamante kick)

LH-Sher 3 run (Butler kick)

OB-Summerfield 7 run (Bustamante kick)

OB-Russell 8 pass from Summerfield (kick failed)

OB-Morgan 8 run (kick failed)

OMAHA SKUTT 29, NORRIS 13

Norris 0 7 0 6 - 13

Omaha Skutt 12 7 3 7 - 29

OS-Guenther 6 pass from D. Van Dyke (kick failed)

OS-L. Van Dyke 4 pass from D. Van Dyke (kick failed)

OS-Kolega 58 pass from D. Van Dyke (Kolega kick)

NR-Garner 12 pass from Behrends (Greenfield kick)

OS-Kolega 38 kick

NOR-Greenfield 30 kick

OS-Guenther 4 pass from D. Van Dyke (Kolega kick)

NOR-Greenfield 30 kick

SUTTON 30, MCCOOL JUNCTION 28

Sutton 0 8 14 8 - 30

McCool Junction 0 14 8 6 - 28

BENNINGTON 23, WAVERLY 0

Waverly 0 0 0 0 - 0

Bennington 7 7 9 0 - 23

BEN-Bouaphakeo 2 run (Schuman kick)

BEN-Hill 18 run (Schuman kick)

BEN-Lauridsen sack for safety

MALCOLM 34, NORTH BEND CENTRAL 13

Malcolm 7 13 7 7 - 34

North Bend Central 0 7 6 - 13

MAL-Frank 44 run (Meyers kick)

MAL-McGreer 12 pass from Frank (conversion failed)

MAL-Meyer 25 run (Meyers kick)

MAL-Fox 12 pass from Little (Meyers kick)

NBC-Hanis 61 pass (kick good)

NBC-Hanis 20 pass (kick failed)

MAL-Frank 2 run (Meyers kick)

Volleyball

From B1

Cook has talked about; she finished with five kills on 10 attempts.

"It's hard coming off the bench," Cook said. "We've been working the last couple of days on (Landfair) really hitting the ball hard, and she swung hard tonight. I think that left-front player is going to be remembering that hit for a while. There's not many players that can do that."

Then Jackson smashed down a kill on a short slide play, and Reilly had a block on set point for a 25-20 set win.

In the third set, Nebraska brought in transfer outside hitter Taylor Landfair and transfer middle blocker Leyla Blackwell for the first extended time on the court.

"We changed the lineup in the third (set), and we didn't miss a beat," Cook said. "Sometimes when we do that it backfires a little bit. I'm really pleased with all of that."

Landfair had some of those "wow" kills that



KENNETH FERRIERA, J